

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 17 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 4 are amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in claim 9 and to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0015]. Claims 9-16 are canceled.

Claim 17 is added to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, Fig. 2 and paragraph [0017].

Claim 3 is amended, as the Examiner suggested.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner Greene for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the June 6 telephone interview. The substance of the telephone interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action objects to claim 3. Claim 3 is amended, as the Examiner suggested. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 3 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 1-145377 to Tsukada; and rejects claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over JP 2003-25316 to Abe et al. ("Abe"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 4 are amended to recite that the honeycomb structure is a monolithical structure, as originally recited in claim 9. Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest this feature.

The Office Action asserts that Tsukada discloses "monolithically formed" in Figs. 1 and 2 and Abstract, and Abe discloses "one piece" in the Abstract and paragraphs [0018], [0027] and [0032]. However, the cited portions of Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest the asserted feature.

In particular, although Tsukada and Abe disclose a honey structure that is one piece. They do not disclose or suggest that the honeycomb structure is a monolithical structure. To the contrary, Abe discloses that the two parts of the honeycomb structure are formed of different materials, and then joined together in one piece.

Additionally, claims 1 and 4 are amended to recite additional features disclosed in the specification, as outlined above. In particular, claims 1 and 4 are amended to recite that "a difference between P_i (%) and P_o is within a range of about 3-10%." Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest this feature.

In particular, as discussed during the telephone interview, Abe does not disclose or suggest this feature. Abe merely discloses, in paragraphs [0031] and [0032], that honeycomb section 10 has a porosity 20-40%, and that honeycomb section 11 has a porosity of 40-80%. However, Abe does not disclose or suggest a difference between the porosities that is within a range between 3-10%.

On the other hand, as discussed during the telephone interview, the range of 3-10% is disclosed in the present application as a critical range. See the specification at, for example, paragraph [0015]. Examiner Greene agreed during the telephone interview that claim 1, as amended above, appears to distinguish over the applied references.

For at least the above reasons, Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest a monolithical structure, as recited in claims 1 and 4. Therefore, Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 4, and claims 2, 3 and 5-8 depending therefrom.

Furthermore, Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest the relation $D_i > D_o$, as recited in claim 2.

The Office Action asserts that Abe discloses a honeycomb structure in which the diameters D_i and D_o independently vary. However, such an asserted independent variation of

parameters D_i and D_o does not disclose or suggest a relation of $D_i > D_o$. Thus, Abe does not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 2.

In view of the above, Tsukada and Abe do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1, 2 and 4, and claims 3 and 5-8 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §102(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 17 is patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1, from which it depends, as well as for additional features it recites. For example, Abe discloses a honeycomb structure with only two sections. Abe does not disclose or suggest an intermediate portion between the central portion and the outer peripheral portion, much less of the three diameters recited in claim 17.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-8 and 17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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